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"And what rough beast its hour come round at last . . ."—*William Butler Yeats*

THE CHIMERA

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The Vaudeville Year

By Coleman Rosenberger

After the midgets and the man with the trained ape
Came the female impersonator who made love
To the acrobat in pink tights who swayed above
Filled with the girl in the third row and rape.

The square light focused over the heads in the hall
To unreel the pictures to the spell-bound eye:
The trick hero and the international spy,
The siege, the plane twisting, the wall that fell.

The pompoms juggled on September air.
And yet how would we answer if one day
At length in wonder should Cinda's daughter say
"How was it then? What was it like there?"

Purely Subjective

By W. H. Auden

WHO?

I WAKE into my existence to find myself and the world that is not myself already there, and simultaneously feel responsible for my discovery. I can and must ask: "Who am I? Do I want to be? Who do I want and who ought I to become?" I am, in fact, an anxious subject. That is my religious problem. I experience subjective requiredness, i.e., a requiredness the source of which I cannot identify with anything I can call an object, and which concerns the meaning and value of my existence to myself. That is my immediate religious experience which allows me no rest until I believe I have understood it.

* * *

I begin by trying to answer my questions aesthetically, saying, "I and my nature, myself as subject and myself as individual are the same. Over against me is a world of other individual-subjects who are responsible, not for my existence, but for my anxiety about it. When I have learnt how to persuade them to love me and serve me, I shall no longer be anxious." As long as I make this aesthetic identification of my subjectivity with my individuality, I cannot distingush between "I am required to do this for my salvation" and "My nature requires me to do this for its health and happiness." I am conscious, of course, of a conflict between incompatible requirements and of my failure to satisfy them all,

but I attribute this conflict and weakness to sources outside myself. I believe in as many gods as I recognise distinct requirements, and in a Fate behind them all which indicates that even the gods pass.

* * *

The moment, however, I have realised that my individual nature can be as much an object to myself as the rest of the universe, I realise that my polytheism was an anthropomorphic myth, a false subjectification of objective needs. I recognise that I am tempted by my nature, that 'I want to do such and such' means 'my nature wants me to do it. If I do it, I am possessed by my nature,' and 'I ought to do such and such' means 'I am required to do such and such which I can only do if I possess my nature.' The question now is 'required by whom or what?'

* * *

So I give up the aesthetic solution and try the ethical. I say: "It is not I who am anxious but my nature. When I have learned to know myself completely as an object, I shall no longer be anxious." Having discovered that my identification of subjectivity with individuality was false and led me to imagine that so much that I did was subjectively required which really was nothing of the kind, I proceed to identify subjectivity with ignorance, and to assume that all true requiredness is objective, that my weakness and conflicts are caused by my subjectivity. My new God, Scientific Truth, the Dialectic, the Absolute or whatever I may call him, cannot be accused of being like a human being, because He cannot conceivably be thought of as a subject. That does not however make him any the less anthropomorphic. He is the image of my subjective idea of myself as a pure epistemological I, without parts or passions.

* * *

My religious problem remains a problem because I have two incompatible answers both of which can expose the other. My aesthetic self hates science because the former wants to answer

the question "Who am I?" by a simple "I am I" and science keeps pointing out that my individuality is not absolute, that I can say, "I am a mammal with a highly-developed fore-brain. I am the child of my parents, etc., etc." On the other hand my ethical self hates art because it keeps pointing out that however many predicates science may assign to it, the subjective I is never reduced to a pure epistemological subject, but stubbornly remains very interested in its existence. I am forced to admit that the problem is insoluble by myself. I then have the alternatives either of trying to ignore the problem or tell myself it is unreal, or of saying, "I am required to exist" means "I am required by God to exist" but about God all I can learn for myself is what He is not, namely, that He is not me, and He is not an object. To know anything positive about Him, I must wait for Him to reveal Himself to me.

I

How do I love myself? As an existing subject. It is only when I consider myself in relation to others that I admire or pity myself. Suppose I have some gift or talent. Subjectively I cannot admire myself, for admiration presupposes a superiority, and I cannot be superior to my gift for it is mine. Vice versa, if I have some defect or weakness, it is only in comparison with others who appear to me whole or strong that I can pity myself. Subjectively, there is no inferior I to envy a superior me. Subjectively, to love myself means, then, to be in sympathy with myself, and that is what I want my neighbor to mean if he says he loves me. Thus if I am beautiful or clever and my neighbor says this, I shall torment myself with wondering: "Is it only admiration? Would I be still loved if I were to become ugly or stupid?" Nor is it possible to be pitied without being insulted because this is not love, without feeling, like Richard III, "I'll show the world that the defect for which it pities me, is not the real me." It is as a subject that I understand the meaning of decision and faith. I am a young man who decides one fine day that I am going to be a

surgeon. If this is a genuine decision, I do not say: "I think I should be most successful as a surgeon," but "I am required to become a surgeon. I say yes. I cannot be certain that I shall succeed, though I believe that this is required of me because only by being a surgeon can I make the most of the nature which I have been given and for which I am now responsible. But whether I am to succeed or fail, I now dedicate myself to the possibility of becoming a surgeon. I have a vocation."

A decision is a choice concerning the future and the possible, and faith is the subjective passion which makes me able to do that, to make a decision of my own.

Vocational guidance is therefore a contradiction in terms. The only reason another can give me why I should become a surgeon is because in his opinion I should be more successful or richer or happier as a surgeon than any other profession, but such matters are exactly what I must not think about if my work is to be my vocation. Just as, if I say: "Lily is a nice girl; a bit homely but rich and devoted to me. I'd better marry her," I may show common sense but I certainly show that I'm not in love.

In relation to the actual, faith is not in question, because it is not a matter of my deciding to do something, but of responding to the demands of the objective situation. If I step out of the path of an automobile, my behavior is required by the physical positions of my body and the automobile. It does, of course, presuppose that I have decided to live, and there faith is very much in question.

* * *

It is as a subject that I understand the meaning of sin. I am an ambitious college professor slated to become head of my department on the death of the present head who is now old and ill. I catch myself wishing he would die. I am ashamed. I feel responsible for the wish and therefore guilty. It is only when I start to look at myself as an object that I say: "My ambitious nature is not my creation, but the creation of my heredity and environment. My feeling of guilt is not mine, but a reflex conditioned in me by my society which thinks it wrong to wish another dead."

The wish "came" to me; it was not the result of a conscious choice; nevertheless I have wished it, and it is as irrevocably a fact and mine as an act of murder. It is only when I start comparing myself with others that I say: "Everybody has similar wishes from time to time. All that matters is that none of us should convert such wishes into deeds." But as a subject I know that the sinfulness of my wish is not affected one way or the other by being reduplicated in others or by any wishes or actions that may or may not precede or follow it. For the subjective alternative is not the ethical alternative of good or evil, but the religious alternative of innocence or guilt. Ethically the question is: "Do I yield to the temptation or do I resist it?" If I resist I am good. Religiously I know myself to be a sinner not because I necessarily yield to temptation, but simply because I am tempted.

YOU

I become aware of your existence as a subject like myself. I compare our existences and find that in no respect are we equal, and that any inequality requires the inferior to acknowledge authority and the superior to accept responsibility.

These inequalities can be divided into two kinds, aesthetic inequalities which neither of us can alter and ethical inequalities which both of us are required to alter. You are more beautiful and intelligent than I. Your beauty and intelligence are gifts with which you have been endowed by nature, not the product of any voluntary action on your part. I have not been so endowed, and nothing either of us can do can equalise or reverse the difference. On the other hand I know the multiplication table up to eleven times, and you only know it up to ten. I was not endowed with this knowledge but have learnt it from others and can teach it to you, so that the inequality disappears. Then, maybe, since you are the more intelligent, you learn the twelve times table before I do, and the inequality is reversed; now it is you who can teach me.

Your aesthetic authority over me is subjectively necessary, for

it is not you who have found your gifts, but your gifts which have found you. What is required of me is passive admiration which does not demand that you should notice me in return, but rejoices because there are many things in the world which I see need doing and which I cannot do but you can.

If it had been me who was your aesthetic superior, then what would have been required of me would have been that I should not demand any admiration from you, but that I should recognise that possessing gifts which you lack requires me to do many things which are not required of you.

But my temporary ethical authority over you is subjectively accidental, for it is I who have found the extra mathematical truth, not the truth which has found me. What is required of me therefore is that I cancel my authority by sharing the truth with you, and if you then surpass me, try to catch up with you again.

* * *

Aesthetic authority tempts the inferior in two ways. It tempts him to exaggerate it, to deny that he has any gifts himself for which he is responsible, and to demand that the superior be responsible for his existence. And it tempts him to try to minimise and destroy it. One of the commonest forms of this envy is lust which attempts to treat aesthetic authority as if it were ethical authority, to make the sexual act an act of appropriation, of "learning" beauty from another, as one can learn the multiplication table.

The superior, too, is doubly tempted—to exaggerate the importance of his gifts, to demand that everyone recognise them, and to treat them not as gifts which have found him and with the help of which he may find the truth, but as the truth itself which he has found. The first form of pride makes him a tyrant, the second makes him neglect using his gifts until they decay and disappear.

The envy and pride, to which ethical authority is a temptation, function in the reverse direction and try to treat ethical authority as aesthetic authority, the universal truth as an individual gift.

Just as lust attempts to cancel aesthetic authority by appropriation, "transference" exaggerates ethical authority by adopting a passive attitude of admiration which denies the obligation to attain equality before the truth by appropriating it. Corresponding to the aesthetic pride which insists on universal recognition is the aesthetic pride which refuses participaton and treats the truth as its private gift, a hermetic mystery, until it loses the power to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Aesthetic authority which arises from a necessary inequality of finite individuals in relation to each other, and ethical authority which arises from an accidental inequality in their respective relation to the universal truth are both objectively manifest so that their recognition is not a matter of faith. We can exaggerate or minimise their importance, accept or abuse them, but we cannot fail to recognise their existence.

* * *

There is a third kind of authority, however, the recognition of which is an act of faith because it does not arise from any manifest inequality, neither the aesthetic All-or-None, nor the ethical More-and-Less, but from the subjective religious contradiction of innocence and guilt. You have done me no wrong; I do you a wrong; you forgive me. If I can believe that you have forgiven me, then I recognise your religious authority and am bound to repent. My problem is not of exaggerating or minimising or rebelling against it, but of being able to believe that it exists. If I can do that, I cannot offend. But it is so hard to believe, indeed almost impossible unless I know myself your aesthetic and ethical superior. I steal five dollars from you: if you are a rich man and refuse to prosecute, I may believe that you are merciful, but not that you have forgiven me. I shall think that you do not prosecute because you consider me as beneath your notice, and though you may think stealing wrong in the abstract, no wrong has been done you as an individual by me as an individual.

It is only if I am a millionaire and the five dollars I steal are your life savings; there is a policeman at the corner of the street,

and you do nothing that I shall find it in any way easy to believe that you have forgiven me. Similarly, if I am an ignorant slum-child and you are a famous psychologist who pats me on the head and says, "Poor child. Don't be frightened. I understand. You're stealing money because your parents don't love you" I may admit your understanding, but I shall not believe that you forgive me, because everything you say suggests that even if my act has made you suffer you don't believe that I am responsible for it. If it is the other way around, it is I who am the psychologist who knows about kleptomania and you are the ignorant slum-child, then maybe I can, if I do not despair. For it is in the cases where I am the superior and do the wrong, and yet am forgiven by you, that I am compelled to see that your authority is religious, because I cannot imagine being able to forgive me if I were you, yet in every respect that I can see I am your superior.

I cannot believe that you forgive me because that involves the paradox that you admit that I have done you a wrong, that it is important and makes you suffer, that you hold it to be my own free act, and at one and the same moment say that it is of no account. How can I believe that you see my guilt as clearly as I, and yet believe as if I were as innocent as I see you to be.

ME AND IT

Insofar as I consider my immediate existence only, I being in an actual universe, my decisions are concerned only with the problem of attention, of attending or ignoring, of saying truthfully "This is This," or of saying falsely "This is That." My freedom of choice is a freedom to be honest with myself or dishonest, not to make actual existence whatever I fancy. For being the requirement is the aesthetic acknowledgement: "Whatever is, is right." But immediate being is not the whole of my existence. Precisely because I can attend to myself, I am a being who is required to become, to transcend any given state of myself and realise possibilities beyond the present and the actual. In this the requirement concerns not attention but action, and produces the ethical acknowledgement: "Nothing is right.

Everything must be changed." In contradistinction to the aesthetic demand to accept *everything* and reject nothing, the ethical command is to realise *something* and exclude *everything else.*

There are not, of course, two kinds of decision, but every decision is mine and involves these two elements, so that I can use the anxieties associated with each, the aesthetic anxiety about the certain and actual and the ethical anxiety about the uncertain and possible, one against the other to escape both requirements. Thus, I say, "Whatever is, is right," not when I should say it, which is when I am suffering and others seem to me happy by comparison, but only when I am happy and do not want to say "I must change" because I fear the suffering that such change might involve. I am not, as I imagine, responding to the aesthetic command, but yielding to my ethical anxiety. Vice versa, when I am happy, as I think, by comparison with others, I do not say "Everything must be changed"; I only say this when I am suffering and wish to escape from it. Again it is my aesthetic anxiety masquerading as the ethical command.

* * *

The religious function of art is the destruction of auto-idolatry, i.e., of the notion that the faith required to make a subjective decision is faith in myself. Since Art can only deal with what is manifested, it cannot say that the faith I require is a faith in God; it can only say: "Those who trust in themselves lose the power to react correctly to actual situations and are destroyed by what appear to them to be objects outside their own control." That is why art deals in the exceptional and the unexpected, in heroes and reversals of fortune.

The tragic hero has more faith in himself than the average, i.e., the audience, but this faith is largely derived from his fortunate circumstances which he attributes to his own merits. The audience and he are one in believing that the way to attain happiness as power is to have faith in oneself, the difference between them being that the audience are envious: "If only I were lucky like him," they think, "I should have faith in myself and I too

should be blessed and free." But this superior faith for which the audience envy him turns out to be what sets circumstances in motion to destroy him. The hero himself dies under the impression that he is a passive victim. The audience know this to be false, because the moment he begins to suffer, they cease to identify themselves with him, and become objective.

The comic hero, on the other hand, has less faith in himself than the audience, is the kind of person they do not want to be, yet, lo and behold, circumstance takes him in hand and without his lifting a finger delivers to him the beautiful princess and a million dollars; he began by taking his position as nobody in particular as much as a matter of course as the tragic hero took his good fortune, and at the end is as surprised by his triumph as the tragic hero is by his fall. The emotions of the audience are similarly changed but in the reverse direction, this time from pity to envy.

Both objectively and subjectively the witness of art is the same: "It is hard for the gifted to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, and the meek shall inherit the earth." If I, as the audience, receive this witness objectively, I say: "This is a nice fairy story. In real life, unfortunately for me because I am one of the meek, things don't happen that way. I have only to use my eyes to know that it is the gifted who get the Princess and the million dollars, and the meek who die in poverty and disgrace." I am not offended by what looks to me like an inversion of the truth, because I can also see that all this is only play-acting. When the tragic hero whom I have just seen commit suicide takes his curtain call, he will be alive and smiling; the comic hero whom I have just seen marry a beautiful princess will bow and go home to his real and middle-aged spouse. If this is how I take art, it means that I am falsely consoled because I identify myself with both heroes when they are happy, and become an objective spectator the moment they are not. Art, then, does me harm for it tempts me into an aesthetic pantheism in which I find it so interesting to be a puppet of fate and so consoling to believe that deciding anything on my own is bound to lead to trouble. If I am rich it encourages me to

be selfish; if I am poor, to indulge my daydreams and resentments. The witness of art is so often taken in this way that the moralist who attacks "good art" on the grounds that it weakens the conscience and the will, has a very strong case. At the same time the average sensual man begins to realise that "good" art is not indulgent enough and that for daydreaming such shows as bullfights in which the suffering is real and hot burlesque in which the sex is real, are more efficient.

It is only when I try to appropriate the aesthetic manifestation subjectively that it ceases to console and becomes an offensive truth. Now I begin to see why art makes the tragic suffering and the comic happiness unreal and contradicts at the same time my experience that in life it is the strong man who gets the Princess and the weak man who dies in poverty. Art takes my own goods, the goods of this world, and my own anxiety about getting or keeping them, and reveals a contradiction. The unreality of his suffering witnesses to me not that the tragic hero does not really suffer, but that his real suffering is not what he thinks it is, but what he calls his happiness, namely his notion that he deserves his good fortune. The offensive truth for me is: "This hero is either what I am or what in self-reflection I would like to be, and here I am told that as long as I am or would like to be such a man, I am really, without knowing it, dying in disgrace."

The comic offence is that the comic hero is just as happy when he is nobody in particular as when he has married the Princess, so that I exclaim: "What! Here is a man whom I would not like to be, yet I am told that he is blessed because he is happy in circumstances which I should call suffering. In other words, living with a Princess, means accepting suffering."

* * *

The religious function of science is also iconoclastic, the destruction of hetero-idolatry, the notion that no faith is required by the subject to take a decision, for its nature is determined by objects, that it is not I who take decisions towards Nature (including my own), but Nature (including my own) which takes

decisions towards me. No more than art can science say: "The faith required is a faith in God"; it can only say: "No object has the last word in deciding what you shall become. On the contrary, it is you who have the power and the responsibility to decide what Nature (including your own) shall become."

* * *

I have a bad stammer which, as everyone else agrees, makes life difficult for me, because it makes me different from other people. I envy brilliant orators and think how easy life must be for them. I am resentful and in consequence make life even more difficult for myself than it need be.

One day, someone recommends a good psychologist. I enter his consulting room thinking: "Soon everything is going to be easy. I shall be able to become the great man I have always wanted to be." After a few visits the psychologist is able to show me that my stammer is caused by a conflict between my ambition to be greater than other people and my fear that I am pretty average, so that rather than admit the latter, I have negatively indulged the former. Since I could not be different by being greater, I have preferred being different by being less. My objective suffering, my stammer, makes it appear that I suffer because I am an exception, but this is actually an escape from my real suffering which is the fear that I am only average. Whether I can be cured of my stammer or not depends upon whether I can accept the suffering of being average.

But this is not the whole story. The question remains why, if I am average, my suffering over this should be exceptional. Perhaps I really do have some exceptional gift which arouses a sense of exceptional ethical requirement, but have refused to acknowledge it as such because its exercise would not bring me worldly recognition, since it is not of a kind that the average value, and I have accepted the average evaluation as an objective requirement, since not to be applauded would be a subjective suffering. Science, via the authority of my psychologist, has succeeded in showing me that I have power over my nature. I have made it stammer—and that my nature is different in its capacities from

what I fancied, but science cannot give me the power to decide to exercise my power. If the psychologist assures me that I should develop my gift despite the fact that society regards it as of no value, he is not exercising his scientific authority, but his authority as an aesthetic individual. He can truthfully say: "You will be unhappy if you refuse to develop it;" but I know that already through my stammer. He cannot say objectively: "If you develop it, you will be happy," for part of my present unhappiness is due to my objectively true knowledge that if I do, I shall not be a worldly success.

Finally, if he smiles and says: "True happiness is not of this world," I shall hit him on the nose, for I see no signs of his being unhappy and since he has just handed me his bill I hold the proof that he is a success in this world. Such a remark can only be accepted as religious authority which consists in the speaker being himself the proof that what he says is true.

H E

There is no such thing as a Christian or a Christian society for no one can say: "I am a Christian," only "I am a sinner who believes the Jesus is the Christ whom I am required to become like. I shall not be a Christian or even understand fully what the word Christian means until I have become like Him." Every attack on Christianity has a good case, for one kind of paganism can always find its contrary kind of paganism among Christian sinners, and confuse this with the offense which Christ is to both impartially.

* * *

Aesthetic paganism attacks the Christian faith because it is not supernatural enough. It requires that the Word should be made extraordinary Flesh. Its objection to the Incarnation is that Jesus was not an aesthetic hero, but all too human. It tries to prove its case by pointing to all the dull, stodgy, lazy and unattractive Christians it can find. Scientific paganism lumps all the religions together as subjective and supernatural as if the difference be-

tween those religions for which God has never been seen except in a vision, and the Christian religion for which God manifested Himself in the world at a historical time and place as a human individual. It is willing to accept Jesus as a good man in his day, if only he had not suffered from the silly delusion that he was the only-begotten Son of the Father. It points to all the violent, power-loving, superstitious Christians it can find as a proof.

* * *

"As you know," says my Imagination, "the search for the Visible God, the supreme excellence to admire and depend upon is the consuming passion of my existence, so when I hear that another God has come down to men, you can imagine with what eagerness I push through the crowd to get a front-seat view. I am amazed and disappointed. Where is the greatness? A God should have an interesting appearance. I am not naive about beauty like the crowd. A mature taste finds it fascinating that Alcibiades should have been so beautiful in body and so base at heart or that the great intellect of Socrates should have been concealed behind such an ugly face. But I look at this man, and what do I see? Someone who looks exactly like everybody else. Indeed if I try to remember him, I can only paint pictures either of the baby everyone starts out by being, or of the dead man everyone ends up by being.

"I listen to what he says. Not one remark of his makes me exclaim: 'I wish I'd said that.' As poetry the Sermon on the Mount does not compare with Laotse or even minor writers of his own school like Jeremy Taylor, let alone the great masters.

"I watch his actions, not an easy task, because he does very little in public. I have to rely largely on second-hand rumours. At least this looks more encouraging; some blind people are restored to sight, some lepers are cleansed, some are dispossessed of devils. Maybe he has power after all. But when I look more closely, this is not the case. It is not he who has the power, but the sick who are healed by their faith in him. When that is absent he is powerless. Think of Hercules or Alexander and Napoleon

being unable to act without the faith of others. Why, if I think of writing a play about his life, I realize at once it is impossible; with all the devices for concentrating interest that I know, I could never succeed in making him even noticed by the audience; they would always be watching the other characters.

There remains the final test: How does he die? I cannot conceive of anything greater in tragic interest than the dying god, the last heroic defiance of the inexorable Faith; it is the daydream of my life. But here my disappointment was greatest of all. Death must be really inevitable—to desire death is weakness—but if it must be, then the hero must make a good impression. What happens in this case? First he foretells his death; then he prays that he may be spared; then he declares that if he wished he could prevent it, yet submits. I stand on Calvary and watch his execution. When he is nailed to the cross, he makes no attempt to resist; I have seen quite ordinary men kill seven soldiers before they were overpowered. During his agony, he speaks; he says: 'I thirst, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' I have seen hundreds of men endure the worst tortures without letting a single cry escape them.

"No, I cannot find a single trait or incident about him which convinces me that he has authority. He is not the Life."

* * *

"I must be honest with you," says my Reason, "and admit that I came to the consideration of this case already strongly biased against it. The appearance of men who claim to be gods is as old as history, and in their wake, wars, persecutions, hatred, death, follow as the night the days. The spread of the scientific spirit has discouraged them a little, though the recent recrudescence of this phenomenon in Fascism shows how much work still remains to be done.

"When I heard that this man had said: 'I am the Truth,' I knew I should have to deal with a madman, for any high-school boy knows that truth is something which is discovered piece by piece

through the patient efforts of generations of experimenters and that there is no finality to this process. But the progress is real: any high-school boy knows more about the structure of matter than Plato.

"However, it is the duty of a scientist to keep an open mind, and though a Jew who lived in the reign of Tiberius could hardly be expected to throw as much light on problems of personal psychology as the social sciences, we have made so little progress in these fields where laboratory conditions are lacking, that we would welcome any suggestion, and madmen have been known to have remarkable intuitions.

"When I saw him, I was, I must say, agreeably surprised; except for the one delusion, he seemed well-adjusted and quite normal, and I cannot help laughing at the disappointment of our foolish friend, Imagination, who came all agog to witness some extravagant behavior. Moreover, within his limits he seemed honest. He admitted quite frankly that his startling cures were simply faith cures, and asked no credit for them. There was none of the usual claim to occult powers and hermetic knowledge. But even this honesty was a part of his mania, for he kept insisting that faith was a supremely important thing. Any good doctor knows that the confidence of his patients plays a role in therapy, but he does not rejoice in the fact. At present, he has to accept and secure it if he can, because so little is known about the relations of body and mind, but it is the whole aim of science to eliminate subjective uncontrollable factors of this kind.

"The man dismissed his cures, which were his real claim to distinction, as unimportant compared with his teaching. I have gone all through this and again I am a little puzzled. Apart from the supernatural vocabulary which was inevitable probably at that time, his personal and social ethic was comparatively liberal. Though chaste himself, he was not a sour ascetic nor fanatically intolerant of the failings of others, and he has no trace of the racial consciousness one would have expected in a Jew.

"It was only when I examined his statements carefully that I discovered that the reason why I did not disagree with them was

that they had no definite meaning, so that one could make them mean anything one liked.

"For instance, he said that unless one became a child one could not be in touch with reality. Well, whatever charm a child may have, a sense of reality is exactly what he lacks, and moreover he is utterly selfish. What meanings can be given to such an extraordinary remark except that it is a mistake to learn to read and write and reason? He kept attacking the religious hierarchy of his time as hypocrites which no doubt they were, but in their fumbling way, they did at least try to lay down *some* laws of hygiene and social behaviour, to give society some standards. Thou shalt not commit adultery may be too strict a rule, but its meaning is clear. Either one commits it or one doesn't. But this man wished to replace it by He who looks at a woman with desire commits adultery, that is to say, everyone commits adultery. What help is this? If he thinks adultery wrong, a man must spent his life in a morbid introspective state of guilt. If he doesn't, then any sexual conduct is permissable. Nor is his advice on social and political matters any less vague. The poor are told they shall inherit the earth, and the rich are warned that they are out of touch with reality. The rich will only reply: 'My automobile and my five servants are real enough for me.' While the poor will fly from the miserable reality of their condition into day-dreams of another world beyond the grave where, without effort on their part, they will be the bosses.

"The relation between the rights of the individual and the rights of the State is a problem which has exercised some of the greatest intellects of history. All this man can offer is that the individual should get his due and the State its due which is hardly very illuminating.

"As for his execution, which has turned out to be a historical disaster, for had it not happened, he would have been forgotten, it is difficult to see what else the authorities at that time could have done. We are more humane today, but we should have to confine him to an institution for his own sake as well as others. It is always very unpleasant to have to do this. The truth is some-

thing that a scientist has to be willing to die for if necessary—and the fact that this man died for an illusion he mistook for truth does not make him any the less brave or his death less horrible. I hope that I am never put to the test myself, I can admire his courage, but I must deny his authority. He was not the Truth."

* * *

If a man who is in love is asked what gives his beloved such unique value for him over all other persons, he can only answer: "She is the fulfillment of all my dreams." If the questioner has undergone any similar experience, the subjectivity of this answer causes no offense because the lover makes no claim that others should feel the same. He not only admits that "she is beautiful" means "she is beautiful for me but not necessarily for you" but glories in this admission.

If a man who professes himself a Christian is asked why he believes Jesus to be the Christ, his position is much more difficult, since he cannot believe this without meaning that all who believe otherwise are in error, yet at the same time he can give no more objective answer than the lover: "I believe because He fulfills none of my dreams, because He is in every respect the opposite of what He would be if I could have made Him in my own image."

Thus, if a Christian is asked: "Why Jesus and not Socrates or Buddha or Confucious or Mahomet?" perhaps all he can say is: "None of the others arouse *all* sides of my being to cry 'Crucify Him'."

Socrates, for instance, was sufficiently an offense to cause the State to put him to death, but not so great that all his disciples forsook him and fled. His irony and pedagogical method of Doubt is offensive to the emotional masses and the worried guardians of public order, but to the critical intellect which dislikes and fears the will, it is a delicious indulgence. Outside the cell where he drinks the hemlock is the angry crowd, but inside are gathered the select few, conscious of their superiority. One can imagine Socrates washing the feet of an illiterate slave, but it

would have been an ironic way of saying "We are all slaves to feeling and convention," not the unequivocal statement "The last shall be first."

On the other hand the intellectual and the urbane man of the world whose motto is the socratic *dubito ut intellegam* or the Montaignesque *que sais-je?*, is offended at anyone who demands of him that he begin not understanding but with belief, which is a demand which the emotions welcome, provided that in return they are granted certainty without responsibility, provided that they are allowed to say "we believe" and not required to say "I believe."

If those who make such claims rarely suffer the fate of Socrates, this is because they are men of action in the worldly sense, whereas their natural enemies, the intellectuals, are rarely in a position of political power. They may die on the battlefield or on the scaffold of a rival, but they do not die voluntarily, nor are they silent as a lamb before his shearers is dumb.

When a person who calls himself a Christian attacks the scientific method as such, he only betrays his anxiety lest his faith should turn out wholly or in part to be an aesthetic faith in himself, i.e., in his temperament and upbringing. Vice versa, whenever a scientist attacks religion in general, he betrays his anxiety lest it should turn out that when he is not engaged in actual experiments on objects which are weaker than he, but is placed in any of those situations called personal, i.e., when he is forced to be an existing subject and the object of attention from other subjects, far from remaining impersonal and scientific, he becomes a passive object, the blind tragic hero with a shocking temper, the bewildered rat of his own maze.

* * *

When a clergyman gets up in the pulpit and says: "Christianity is the only hope of a Post-War world" as if he were giving his congregation a tip on how to make friends and influence people, it is difficult not to be angry, not because what he says is false, but because it is true, and put in this avuncular way nobody

is going to take it seriously. If the congregation understood what was being said, they would say either "Yes. I agree. Alas for me, how shall I be able to endure" or "If that's the sort of world you call decent, you're crazy."

On the other hand, when scientists declare that knowledge is power and that the truth will set us free, again what they say is true, but the glib way in which it is said prevents people from taking it seriously. If people understood what power and freedom meant they would say either: "Yes, I must accept responsibility for what I am but, O dear, what a terrifying prospect that is" or "If the freedom science offers means that I shall only be able to blame myself when I am unhappy, if it is going to force me to make up my mind about everything, take the horrid thing away, give me back my toothache and my enemies because even certain pain is better than the dreadful void of uncertainty. When I have toothache or am afraid of the cop on the corner, at least I know that I exist."

The Martyrdom of the House

By Alex Comfort

Out of all the enormities which compose war, none made more impression upon me than this. The deaths of people, even of people that one knows, seem somehow to involve less. Lecoq, who saw it happen, seems to have felt much as I do, because he found it hard to tell me of it, and he sweated, wiping his head on the sleeve of his coat. One came to share his feeling of terror.

They had been retiring for five days, beginning somewhere near Faulquemont. On the previous day, going through a town, with planes overhead but no bombs falling, a perfectly childish thing had happened. Up to that time the company had been more or less intact, but at the end of the market-place, becoming mixed up with a couple of crashed trucks and some artillery horses, out-of-hand, half of them had gone to the left of the market hall and half to the right. The hall was a small place with one of those white pyramidal towers, and they could form again beyond it. The two halves never rejoined. Lecoq was in the party which had kept to the right. He could not see over the kit of the man in front, who was tall, but he could see the whitened wall going alongside of him, with small piles of military equipment heaped along it. But the wall went on and on, no longer under eaves, but with long dribbles of ivy overrunning the coping and coming

down into the grass beside the road, and the people from the town, with their goods, sitting all along it and waiting for transport. They wore good clothes, covered with dust from the boots and the tyres of the cars. Presently, after the wall fell away beyond a pond, they saw the left-hand party, marching beyond a couple of beet fields, their helmets going along the top of a low wall. The sergeant pointed them out to their captain, who had chosen the right-hand fork, but he said, "We're on the right road. It's those imbeciles who are wrong. They'll rejoin us." In the town there had been dust, so much of it that one could not have been blamed. All the other officers had taken to the left. Presently, after marching in sight of one another for a few minutes, they passed behind a wood, and Lecoq did not see them again.

Half an hour after they stopped for the rest to catch up, on top of a hill, in a wide sandy *lande* with gorse and a few clumps of pines. They were very high up, and the whole of the valley was under them—Lecoq thought he saw the others, far down by the river, in among a clump of roofs; and the din of the truck gears on the lower road came up. The captain sat on a stump and sucked pieces of grass, looking at his watch. Lecoq and the rest were bitterly cold in spite of the sunshine. One could see the wind bringing up rain from below. When it struck them they crawled into hollows among the burnt gorse roots and watched it pocking up the sand—all the raincapes had gone ahead with the M.T. and vanished into limbo, somewhere North. When the whistle went they rubbed the sand from themselves and began to go down. Lecoq tried watching the shapes of the pine-clumps, seeing them vary as he moved. But the rain went on, gradually washing them apart like a rope of sand. It was dense, too, like a mist, and if one fell out, it closed all around.

One could only tell when one looked round that the column was thinning out. The Captain kept looking round. Lecoq says that once he saw the captain turn and just catch sight of a man, a corporal, popping the anti-tank rifle into a bush, and the captain looked straight back, eyes front, and Lecoq was immeasura-

bly relieved as he knew they weren't going to fight after that. Men kept coming up out of the mist short of equipment, but Lecoq was too near the front of the column and hadn't the gall to get rid of anything. Now one couldn't see the pines, but the slope of the road was less, and they passed houses. Suddenly they dropped out of it, and there were no more than thirty of them, including an artilleryman who had left his limber to pass water and come back to find it gone, and a couple of Foreign Volunteers who had joined on in the mist somewhere. The rest of the company were up on the *lande* or coming down in their own time.

Before it was dark they were off the main roads again, where one couldn't go—they had taken one look from a crossroad into the throng of soaked lorry tarpaulins, cars, and baby-carriages, and turned back without waiting for the order. The captain kept in front, walking steadily, taking them through the lanes that went nowhere, ending in the same corner with its green-roofed barn and pond and willows, coming up out of the rain. Long parallel lines of clouds were cruising over, and one could hear the planes going to and fro above them.

At a bridge they paused—only about twenty of them, counting the three extras—then struck down onto the railway line and walked along that, seeing a minute film of rust on the rails, formed in two days, and a pinkness in the sky ahead. Lecoq says they talked very little, he himself marching between the two volunteers, and still carrying his kit, until he saw that he and the other two were the only men still equipped, and put it down in a long cutting, under the side arch of a tall brick overbridge, in the dry, as if he meant to come back for it later. The volunteers kept theirs. They waited for him stonily, and then marched on, one on each side, like an escort. The captain and the sergeant were about a dozen yards ahead, while behind the tail stretched off under the threatening overbridge and far down the cutting.

Before long, and imperceptibly, it was dark so that Lecoq could not see the track ahead, except as the V-shaped sky of the cutting out of which rain drifted down, nor the plants on the sides of the cutting, except for wide white patches of large daisies,

like white clouds. He noticed these—one kept passing them. The two foreigners kept talking in a language he did not know, and the men in front turned—one could not see them turn, only hear that they were looking—and muttered. The foreign talk made them uneasy. Someone asked sharply who they were, and they said Hungarians, and nobody talked again. They went on. It was pitch dark and one tripped on the chairs. Lecoq nearly killed himself on a pair of points, and for a few minutes a second dull track ran alongside them, keeping them company, until it ended in two disused wagons, resonant as they passed, and a buffer-end.

Then suddenly they seemed to be walking among skulls. There were shiny round objects with a spot of light in them, lying everywhere among the rails. Lecoq kicked one and it rang. They were tin hats, thousands of them, lying. Then the sky blacked out and the rain stopped, and the air suddenly became resonant with a long wet echo. They were passing under the bridge from which the tin hats had been thrown. They kicked them aside, coming among them again on the farther side where the rain began once more.

Lecoq said he had no idea of time after that. Suddenly in the dark he knew they were walking between walls. He could hear Malraux, who breathed through his mouth, walking in front, and the two Hungarians' rifles clicking, and Brissot whistling between his teeth, which he did even in his sleep. Waking himself, he realised the front of the skein had stopped. They lined the right-hand wall and tried to look over. One could see nothing, and the air was full of moving rain. But far down below was the noise of a stream running. They were on a high viaduct. They stood still. He could hear the captain talking.

A little further on, the small light on the captain's compass stopped. There was a little gap in the wall, and a platform with rails, leading to a zigzag iron ladder one could feel underfoot. Someone yelled. He had walked into a signal box. They began to go down the ladder, stiffly, the nails in their boots rattling in the dark. The only sign that they were making progress was the sound of more boots, lower down, and the increased sound of the

stream. Someone slipped and fell with a clatter. Lecoq clung to the rails, his feet slithering on wet iron, stiff as a grandfather, wet, and no longer hoping to reach a destination.

At the bottom he got one of the Hungarians' rifles in the face and fell. The two of them helped him up from among soft noisy ash which covered the ground, thrown down from the signal box stove overhead. It was lighter and the piles of the viaduct soared up beside them. Wetness distilled out of the arches and fell.

They straggled down the village street, among the puddles, hearing the stream running—shouting and banging on doors like lunatics, yelling to be let in. There was a louder shout as one of the men walked edgewise into the open door of a shop. A torch flashed round bare shelves. They had gone. Other doors had huge grey locks hanging, with drops of water on them, or were screwed up, newly screwed, the corporal's torch shewing bright screwheads and white wood splinters round them. The rain was less. They kicked and smashed at the door of an *épicerie* but could not move it. The bakery was still open and smelt of bread. Someone brought a piece of iron pipe which he had tripped on in the dark and began to smash at a lock. Crash, crash, crash. The hall of the house rang back, boom, boom. They put shoulders to it, kicking, smashing with open palms and swearing when it hurt. Others sat in the open shop and looked under the counter or tried to pick the lock of the shop door. Someone found some biscuits. There was a scuffle in the dark and they were spilled in a puddle. The captain had disappeared in the dark. Back in the street they began fighting over the wet biscuits.

Lecoq walked on, away from it. He was looking for somewhere dry to sleep. The two Hungarians were with him, and Brissot was behind him. Presently they overtook Malraux, his shoulders stooping against a bank of white mist like a shadow. Once they blundered into a court full of dung, where there had been cattle. Then, further off, they came to the house.

It stood by itself at the end of the village, surrounded by low fuchsia hedges, and it was the smell of these, which used to grow

round his own home, that attracted Lecoq. The others were close to him. He found the gate and they went in, stepping on soft earth here and there, and finding the door under a little white porch. It was flimsy, locked, but giving above and below, not bolted. Presently it opened. A smell of house, combining new paint, food, and woman, came out. They stood on the step, as if expecting a voice. Nothing moved, but there was a loud rhythmical clock going. Someone said, "Shall we go in?"

They blundered against furniture, their fingers tipped pictures and set them swinging. The buttons of Lecoq's soaked tunic brushed a door and it gave. There was another gust of the dense, feminine smell. He went in, and stretched out his hand. It fell pat around the tall cold metal of an argand lamp, as though someone had placed it in his fingers as he stood. The room was full of the clock. Lecoq said, "Anyone got a match?" Brissot tried to strike one, but it was wet and left only fine transient comet-trails on the box. One of the Hungarians brought out a lighter and passed it over. Its wavering orange flame suddenly lit up his nose and two holes for eyes. Lecoq fumbled with the chimney, dropped it, but it did not break, and all of them scrabbled for it under chairs while the lighter sent up a tall barnyard flame. Suddenly the lamp took, the flame spread round the wick, rose and blinded them.

"Thank God it's full," said someone.

They fell into chairs, not wishing, but compelled by their bodies. Then someone said "Curtains—?" but nobody moved. The blinds were already down. Then Brissot began to laugh, lolling back in the chair.

It was a small room. In the middle was a polished redwood table. The fireplace was full of crinkled red paper into which a few long peacock feathers had been stuck. There were two armchairs with white flowered covers and frills on them like the shoulders of girls. The loud clock had a mild wide face and stood between ornate vases, of spiral glass, imprisoning innumerable bubbles in their sides. There were curtains of the same pale summer-dress stuff, and paper blinds. In a redwood cupboard with a

glass front one could see cups. The mild clock incorporated a vase and in it were paper flowers.

Lecoq said that they sat like this quiet for many minutes, nobody able to get up. Their tunics were sodden—the two Hungarians had settled on the floor, Malraux and Brissot in the armchairs, he himself on a low window seat, padded, with curtains covering a locker.

Brissot was a small correct man with a little moustache, who had been a railway inspector. When he washed himself he used to take off a large wide gold wedding ring with his name engraved inside it, and all the time he whistled almost tunelessly between his teeth, a sort of ghost tune. The joints of his fingers clicked audibly. Now his hair was coming down in rat-tails on his face.

Malraux was large and fair, with wide shoulders and projecting lips. He had been a student of architecture, and sketched occasionally. Now he was sprawling. His face had five days' growth of light shiny hairs. His hands on the white arms of the chair were red with rain. His tunic was soaked. The two Hungarians sat quite still. Each man left a pool round his boots on the red and blue squares of the carpet. The bright argand lamp flamed in the middle, hissing. The paper in the grate uncurled as if of its own volition.

When they were rested, Lecoq said, they began to get up, Brissot first, then the others, and look for food. They began looking round, systematically, as if they meant to buy the place. They opened the cupboard. It was full of smooth cheap cups, each with the same bird pattern, wide blue and white plates, some whelk shells. On the door of the room hung a coloured apron. Then Brissot took the argand lamp and they went out. The first door was a cupboard, smelling of varnish. Up the stairs was a net of peculiar shadows from the balusters. The floor of light came up with them like a lift. The first room was empty. The next was a bedroom with a double bed, made of polished lacquered iron, with large knobs. It was made and uncovered. The mirror on the front of the wardrobe sent back an identical image of the five

men, and the lamp. Malraux walked over and opened it. It was full of woman's clothes, dresses and coats. He unhooked a hanger and brought out a dress, frilled like the edges of the chair covers.

Brissot said, "Put it away. I'm hungry." Malraux laid it on the bed. The drawer was full of small boxes. Malraux took one out and peach-coloured powder spilled all over his tunic. Brissot laughed. Someone said they wouldn't find food in there. There was a man's cap on the door. Downstairs in the kitchen they found tins. The range was blacked and shone. The cupboard was full of conserves, rows of them, labelled, dated 1938 in a woman's writing. Malraux took down an armful. There was a piece of loaf, mildewed. They took it back to the sitting room, and put the white and blue plates on the table. Brissot took off his boots and the rest copied him. They found spoons, rows of them, bright like surgical instruments, and knives, and they broke open the two tins, breaking a spoon on them. One was full of preserved crayfish and the other of peach slices. They dished them out. One of the Hungarians got a spoon and began to eat the jam, alone, without any bread. For a long time they said nothing. After that, Lecoq says that one of them, he does not know which, asked where they would go next day, and he replied nowhere, as it was all up anyhow and one might as well be comfortable. One of the Hungarians said, "They'll shoot me," and after that they shut up and said nothing. Malraux went to sleep. There was nothing to drink. They dipped their fingers in coffee essence and sucked them. Dosing in this bright room, it was as if a piece of the old world, so Lecoq says, had come back to them, without purpose. He fell asleep himself, and woke to find only the two Hungarians, neither of them sleeping. He went to find the others. In the bedroom, Brissot was asleep. All round him were the woman's clothes, scattered about. When Lecoq woke him he went downstairs shamefacedly, muttering about the scent of the room making him think of his wife. Malraux was in the kitchen.

Presently he came back with more tins, and they fetched the plates and began eating again, fruit, some meat, then more slip-

pery peaches. They talked, not reckoning the chances, but trying to guess what the owners of the house had been like. Malraux said they had been a young married couple. Brissot would not talk. Malraux kept saying, "Here's a feast, boys. We're bloody lucky. The others didn't find a crumb. Hear them shouting still? I want to sleep again."

Lecoq said, "Hadn't we better sleep again now?"

Then Brissot said, "What for? We're too tired—there'll be plenty of time tomorrow. We're buggered. There won't be any more marching."

Malraux opened another tin. They all crowded round the lamp. Somehow in Lecoq's mind the beginning of his fear dated from Brissot saying that; although he had known perfectly well that they would be captured. They were tired out, too weary to sleep, after many days of marching and nights spent in catnaps between air raids. They drank the juice out of the peach tin. Malraux began to stir coffee essence into his portion. Brissot cut his mouth on the tin. Over the mild clock hung a mirror, and in that, tilted, the five figures hung once more, among the clean white chair covers. The occupants had left so hurriedly. Nothing was gone. The soft clothes upstairs might have been warm. All their eyes were burning, as if the hot lamp chimney were a furnace. Malraux had finished his concoction, and went to the cupboard for a cup. The white and blue china lay in one of his hands like an eggshell. He poured in the mixture and dropped the cup. It smashed on the floor. Malraux laughed, and then they all laughed. Malraux slipped out. The others were still laughing. The clock went on. The covers of the chairs were becoming soiled. Slowly the wet figures, as Lecoq saw, were bringing the room down to their own level, and the little arrow pieces of the cup crunched underfoot. Malraux came back with an armful of the woman's clothes. He said, "I'm going to make myself comfortable." He lay on the chair and draped them round him. They all laughed. Brissot was fidgeting as though he were drunk. The two volunteers sat quiet, nursing sorrow, laughing at Malraux through it. Lecoq said to Brissot, "Hadn't we better take the plates away?"

Brissot was shaking with laughter. "What for?" he said, "What for?" Then, "We shan't need them. Never come this way again. It's like the place in the story where roast pigs grew on trees and asked to be eaten. Never come this way again. We needn't ever wash up." And he pitched a plate in the fireplace. It smashed. Malraux stared at it, chuckled, pitched his own plate at it. For a moment Lecoq didn't quite realise why nobody came in and protested. It was the first time, barring comic turns, that he had seen a plate deliberately smashed. No, not quite—he had seen a professor of physics break a cheap white plate on purpose to illustrate some fact: he did not remember what. Malraux jumped up, scattering the pretty clothes. He got an armful of cups from the cupboard, put up the vase as a target, and began to throw them. Smash, they went. Little pieces of the blue pattern jumped out and tinkled against the lamp chimney. There were wide smears of damp on the chair covers. He gave Brissot half a dozen cups. "Your balls," he said. Brissot threw them, chuckling when they missed. Presently one hit the vase and knocked off the lip. Brissot's long hands with the ring went out for another cup. His finger joints clicked. He might have been taking tickets, or writing in his shady house in Lille accounts for his wife. He started to say, "Circulez s'il vous plait," in his professional voice, chucking more cups.

They had run out of cups. Malraux said, "I'll get more." The vase was in ruins. He ran out and came back with small jars of jam. They smashed in the grate. He threw one at Lecoq and it made a wide red smear on the wallpaper. They were all laughing. Malraux got up on the table to take better aim. One of the Hungarians swept the lamp out of his way. The table fell and he came down, clutching the curtains. He had stopped laughing. He began steadily to smash the table up. He used his hands and the poker out of the grate. He cut himself on the pieces of jam jar there. Smash, went the poker, leaving wide weals in the table top. Lecoq's chair was pulled from under him, and he found himself breaking it to pieces also. Brissot had begun yelling, and was tearing the covers off the chairs. Malraux, the mild architect, was

striking the walls and lunging at the ceiling, his poker bent double, gashing the flowered paper and the plaster, tearing down the overall off the door, trying to pull the door off its hinges. He was shouting at the top of his voice, "I'll learn this bastard house! I'll learn this bastard house!"

Lecoq said, "We took the lamp and went upstairs. We tore the clothes off the bed, broke the chairs, overset the wardrobe, smashed the ewers on the bedknobs, slit the pillows and threw the feathers about. We tore out the clothes and poured lotion into them. They were pretty things, that I'd like to have got for my wife. But we were killing them, as we would have killed ourselves. We were exhausted but we went on, tearing,smashing,desecrating. Malraux found an axe in the kitchen and we prised up the stair treads. All the time the warm light went with us as Brissot carried the lamp. The shadows went with us. You know how in dreams, now and then, one breaks, destroys? It was a dream then. I was shouting, with the joy of what I was destroying. We even pulled down the wall paper and left it hanging in long strips from the walls. When we went back to finish destroying the chairs and pull down the curtains, the clock was there, a mild face like the face of a beaten dog or a woman one ill-treats. When I saw it I burst out crying, and cried all the time we were smashing the chairs. We could not break the clock. It smiled up at us like a martyr. But we pulled the door off its hinges. Malraux was bleeding from both hands. The two Hungarians had gone, frightened by our madness. Brissot was splashing vinegar on the walls out of a bottle. He had a woman's pink brassiere wound round him. He was covered with plaster.

Then the lamp fell and went out. We sat down among it. Everywhere was broken china. Somewhere in the dark I could hear the clock. And Malraux was still saying—"I'll teach this bastard house to be so bastard ready for us! The tart!"—And spitting in the dark. I was still sobbing. Then suddenly a torch beam came in by the door. The two volunteers had fetched the captain. He stood in the door, and I could see the crest of his helmet. He said quietly, "What in God's name happened?"

We got up. Malraux said in his normal voice, "I'm sorry, mon capitaine. I will pay."

The captain flashed the torch slowly round the room, on the fallen curtains, the chair legs, the jagged wood of the table. Everywhere its light was picked up and repeated by little arrowy bits of china. The clock lay on the floor. The martyred house was quiet, but I could hear its owners' feet run down its stairs into the roads and I cried again. There had been a letter, on the mantelpiece, I think, addressed to Marie somebody—God knows who.

The captain said, "Come out." We came out. In the street it was light. We were covered with food, with powder, with feathers and strips of cloth. The others were formed up in the road. Brissot was also in tears and they ran from his moustache. He kept saying "My wife, my wife." He thought he'd killed her in a dream. The house was quiet among its fuchsia bushes, but its door was open. We had left our boots but we were afraid to go back for them.

Two hours later we surrendered to the Germans. One of them went into the house with his automatic rifle at the ready and they shut the door for fear of booby traps. I think he brought out an unbroken jar of the red jam.

That was the martyrdom of the house. I cried over it for days in the prison camp. It was the only time I ever killed—even in battle.

Two Poems of Thanks, More than Joy

By Paul Goodman

I.

Like a fool fearing, once I could wish
to be happy, I should have
to prove my pleasure: it will break
like a baffling storm!—where is shelter

in this extraordinary landscape?
If all the world (for I am rich)
again blows in the fire away
of my original comfort, oh

nothing but natural magic will
spring on my way and such miraculous
acts, conspiring with the season,
that to escape the tedium at last

of lively creation I'll withdraw
in secret folds of God the only
solacer of joy and only
ending of superabounding love.

II.

Grief many things console, but joy
only God; and the endless pleasure of abounding
love, thank God, in God has an ending;
and the best of all prayer in Thanksgiving! aye,

thanks is aware, not hurrying onward, of what
was in the Beginning as it turned out,
as it has turned out in the heart.
Is anything alive and moves not?

sleep least of all! half dead and all
distractions. And even the prayer
of deepest need consoling lays me bare
to the heavy stab of hope (if He will).

But thanks is perfect! recognizing where,
and more than satisfied that, I am:
but bound, being able, to the claim
of committing a miracle of nature.

The Tactics of Motivation

By Kenneth Burke

(*Continued from Spring Number*)

III

In the closing paragraph of his article, Mr. Dewey writes: "As the war is a global war, so the peace must be a peace that has respect for all the peoples and 'races' of the world." Accordingly, he is opposed to any supernaturalist or anti-naturalist beliefs that "weaken dependence upon the natural agencies, cultural, scientific, economic, political, by which a more humane and friendly world must be built." For "the present tragic scene is a challenge to employ courageously, patiently, persistently and with whole-hearted devotion all the *natural* resources that are now potentially at our command."

Just what, indeed, would be the philosophy (or rather, the *kind of terms*) most appropriate to a world in which the "global" war was followed by some kind of global peace, or at least global pacification?

Thinking in the most general terms, I can imagine three distinct kinds of response to the situation after the war. There will be the response of those who, confronting the perplexities and bewilderments of purpose that must follow the relatively simple logic of the war, will turn to dissipation, with some corresponding rationale that is at least partly systematized. By "dissipation" I have in mind not an out-and-out immorality, but any tendency

to take whatever satisfactions are nearest at hand and let things go at that: a kind of lapse into "isolationism," not merely as regards international politics, but as regards collective planning of any sort. With the whole subject of human motives in great disarray, many people will simply seize whatever opportunities are most available and obey the dictates of the immediate contingencies.

A second response will be that of "fanaticism." Confronting the many rival concepts of motivation (as with the different political and religious philosophies most in favor with different classes and peoples), they will adhere to some one among the list, and call for its triumph over all the others.

A third response would be "liberal"—and I use the term in a sense that could embrace many persons of naturalist, anti-naturalist, and supernaturalist cast, all three. The "liberal" approach to the problem of motivation would be got by featuring a terminology best adapted to *the systematic contemplation of this problem itself*. A given individual of the "liberal" class, as so defined, may for one reason or another give practical allegiance to some one doctrine above all others; but the range of his speculations, even his *sympathetic* speculations, need not thereby stop at this point. And he may, in varying degrees, utilize the speculative resources that our accumulation of documents makes possible.

Some years ago there used to be questionnaires distributed to writers asking, "For whom to you write?" But to meet the needs of "liberalism" as the word is used above, such questionnaires would not be quite accurately phrased. The question should be, rather: "For what *aspect of the mind* do you write?" And as regards naturalists, anti-naturalists, and supernaturalists, I think we could encounter this part of the mind, in varying degrees, and with varying "blind spots," in all three. I should expect to find that it survives in Nazi Germany today; and even with the triumph of Nazism it could gradually gain expression, if the political and economic conditions ever became sufficiently stabilized long enough for writers to develop the necessary linguistic tactics. Ironically enough, the requirements of empire itself place a great demand upon this aspect of the mind.

Under conditions of relative easefulness, such "liberalism" functions somewhat as a luxury product, as with the love of knowledge for its own sake (Veblen's "idle curosity") that Aristotle considered the motive behind the study of metaphysics. In Aristotle's usage, the "liberal" was to be equated with the "useless"; for intellectual speculation was the act of a free man (who is not *used* by other men), in contrast with the work of a slave, who is used. But the intervening periods of Christianity (with its stress upon the dignity of *servitude* to God), business (with its doctrine of *service*),and applied science (commended above all else on the grounds of *utility*),have developed an increasingly *practical need* for this activity (quite as these movements were all, though differently, ways of directing free activity into practical channels).

The greater the degree of heterogeneity in a cultural situation, the greater the *practical need* for this liberal activity. There is a real sense in which each occupational mode has its own language, its own peculiar motivations. Such a state of divergency is most poignant when a highly developed technological culture, with its extreme diversity of occupation and preoccupation, is brought by a "global" situation into close contact with the motivational structures of undeveloped regions, and the greater this poignancy, the greater the need for the liberal, or mediating activity that will, in ranging beyond the confines of a given occupational or preoccupational orbit, deal in the areas of overlap among the orbits.

Insofar as the period after the war still further intensifies the degree of interchange among the various cultures and subcultures of the world, this mediating attitude of mind will be all the more necessary. Ironically, liberal education is being questioned most drastically precisely at a time when the world will have the greatest need for it. That is, the liberal education is needed insofar as it is "global" and "mediatory." But often in practice it has slipped into precisely the state of departmentalization which it should transcend, as the pervasiveness of the departmentalized pattern leads some educators to call for an educational pattern made in its image.

And we repeat: if a pronouncedly "global" situation does prevail, as the present state of our production and communications seems to indicate will be the case, one can even go so far as to maintain that, *even should fanaticism likewise prevail* (as were some one world-wide organization, with a strictly defined doctrine, able to establish its policies above those of any other), there would still be great demands made upon the liberal activity, though it took but the ancillary role of jesuitry (which would learn the language of the unbelievers if only thereby the better to lead them into the fold of the "true" motivational idiom).*

Perhaps all that we are here maintaining fundamentally is this: every philosophy, including the naturalist's philosophy of scientific method, is in itself but a set of *words*. Hence, the only direct approach to it is in terms of the dialectical transformations to which words lend themselves. The thought that "nature" is any less vague or paradoxical a word than "God" can be dispelled by the simple procedure of considering them both as synonyms for

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* The greater the diffusion of a doctrine, the greater its need to adopt motivational features peculiar to specific local situations. For though the doctrine succeeds in defining a universal scene that is taken as the over-all motivation of all men whatever their diversities, it must be modified by terms for local peculiarities of motive (terms for what the Latins would have called the *genius loci*). Polytheisms (in which I would include the various occupational powers of industrialism as secular variants) stress this localness of motive. Monotheisms (in which I would include any secular title for a universal ground of action, such as "nature" or "money"), can prevail only insofar as they are modified by a diversity of "saints" (terms that "break down" the universality of the power into specific physical or mental locations).

Marxism, as viewed "dramatistically," seems to hold that, insofar as the world becomes industrialized, we have everywhere the same scene (at least as regards the most significant motives). That is, people working in a factory at one place would have the same motives as people working in a factory at any other place, since they would all have the motive of the "factory situation" in common. Marxism also seems to have assumed that the monotheism of money (the secular god of capitalism, "universal" as a motivating situation in all parts of the world in which wages and taxes are paid in money rather than in kind) would serve as a rationale that guided the development of capitalist property into a common state of conflict between workers and owners. If capitalism and industrialism had developed at an equal pace throughout the world, we might have had an opportunity to discover empirically whether such a significant similarity of scene would have made possible a corresponding simplicity and symmetry as regards a universal vocabulary of motives.

"scene," "situation," "ground of action," "background," or some such positional word serving as a locus of motivation. For if one begins, not with any specific word for the ground or background of "reality," but with "scene" as a purely "paradigmatic" term, one can next proceed to study, on a purely grammatical, or internal, or "syntactic" basis, the possible ambiguities involved in the attempt to distribute motivations variously among the five paradigmatic terms: act, scene, agent, agency, purpose. That is, before one considers any *specific* philosophy, which will assign specific content, or specific quantity, to these five terms, or to some selection among them that the philosopher would favor while proposing to eliminate the others, the way of "liberal" contemplation that we here have in mind would study the terms merely as an algebra. For in this way, one would discern their potentialities for ambiguity and transformation, and one would discover the many points at which one must make decisions *on faith* and confront *unresovable antinomies*, before one's marriage to a specific terminology of motivation (which he dogmatically identifies with "reality") blinds him to these puzzles.

Or, since one must, by the nature of the case, begin with a philosophy of his own, already formed with greater or less degree of systematization, one may, by the use of the "dramatistic" method, approach alien philosophies in a different manner than is usually the case. One usually approaches them on a "barrister's" basis: that is, one has the point of view implicit in his own philosophy, and one expects the advocate of another philosophy to do what he can in the way of breaking down or transforming this point of view. "Dramatistically," one would act rather to "anticipate" the various philosophies, actual or possible, by analyzing the interrelationships that prevail among the five master terms and then noting how the exploitation of the possibilities contained in these interrelationships can lead to one or another of the philosophic strategies, such as idealism, materialism, pragmatism, realism, mysticism, etc. One can engage this part of the mind even in cases where he already has a fixed philosophy, provided only that he is capable of meditating upon the resources and

embarrassments indigenous to the systematic use of language.

There is, I think, an important difference between a "dramatistic algebra" and the various algebras that have been evolved by positivists in recent years. In the first place, the positivist algebras have aimed at the development of a perfect language, a language that would avoid ambiguities and internal contradictions. I might say in passing that, to my way of thinking, their attempt thus to produce the symbolic parallel of the perpetual motion machine is doomed in advance, for both an eternal world and a created world are equally beyond the range of positivist or operationalist meaning; and where an enigma lies at the very center of the field for which a language would be designed, one may expect this underlying puzzle of substance to mark the entire terminological enterprise. To avoid the initial paradoxes implicit in the concept of a motivating ground or substance by eliminating the category of substance, and to avoid *puzzles* of meaning by calling them *meaningless,* is understandable as a dialectical subterfuge. But insofar as human beings simply cannot conceive of experience other than in terms of ancestry and ground (however variously this term may be construed), one cannot expect them to succeed in perfecting a language which can avoid the paradoxes of ancestry and ground.

In any event, the algebras of language designed by the various brands of symbolic logic "transcend" our everyday experience in a way that the concrete philosophies or terminologies of motivation do not. The "dramatistic" perspective is thoroughly *empirical* in this sense: ask a man to make a rounded statement about somebody's motives for doing something, and if his statement is to be complete it must contain *some kind of* answer to these five questions: it will say what is done (the act), under what circumstances (the situation, scene, ground, of the act), who or what sort of person did it (the agent), by what means he did it (the agency), and for what purpose. Accordingly, if one guides his meditations upon the subject of motives by first inquiring into the possible relations among these five terms (treating them purely as paradigmatic terms, generalizations covering any kind of

agent in any kind of scene, etc.) one will encounter a range of ambiguities that make for possible transformations among the terms. And since the various terminologies of motivation which people live by are but different ways of utilizing these resources, a grammar so constructed should enable one to "anticipate" the specific linguistic choices and manoeuvres. The perspective would thus serve a "synoptic" end, rather than a purely "eclectic" one.

The five terms themselves, or their synonyms, are scattered through both popular speech and systematic thought. The other day, for instance, a political commentator published his column under this head: "Again, Limited Powers for an Unlimited Crisis." Do we not have here an example of thinking in strict accordance with the "scene-act" ratio? For the title suggests that the writer is calling for a kind of action in keeping with the nature of the situation. Windelband's *History of Philosophy* is studded with references to act, agent, and purpose, with "means" or "method" as the more common word for agency, and "ground" (for German, *Grund*, which like our word also has connotations of "reason," as with the "grounds" or "reasons" for one's act).

Mr. Nagel, paraphrasing the position of his opponents, refers to "the human scene." Analysis of the expression discloses how readily these terms can change places. From the standpoint of humanistic dualism, for instance, the "human scene" would be the non-human context of the human, the impersonal nature that is the ground of people's actions. "The human scene" in this sense could as accurately be called "the non-human scene" (an antinomy, or paradox of substance, that one will repeatedly encounter in using the dramatist approach). But often "the human scene" can be used to mean simply "motives peculiarly human," thus locating not "scenically" at all, but in the agent. A similar usage by a literary critic, "the literary situation," revealed on analysis a locating of motive that would fall rather under the term "agency," despite the apparently "scenic" attributes of the term, "situation." For the critic was referring to the motivations derived from the nature of the literary medium.

I particularly liked, in Mr. Nagel's article, his use of the term, "agent," when he is objecting to those opponents who would attribute to science all the ills of the contemporary world. It seems to me, by the way, that if apologists of science would attribute all the advantages of the modern world to science, they might reasonably be asked to have science accept at least some of the blame. We have a good proverbial expression, a bit more "dramatistically" ironical than is to the liking of those who think of science optimistically, in simple terms of "progress." I have in mind the irony of the French formula, "the defects of one's qualities." And considering science a human thing, with human limits, rather than a pure godhead that is by definition absolutely and supernaturally good, one might well expect that science too would manifest the defects of its qualities. But that is not our primary concern at the moment, which is with Mr. Nagel's way of formulating his objection. To charge science with the ills of modern society, he says, would be like calling marriage the cause of divorce. And he continues: "But to convert marriage into the cause of divorce, and the advance of secular knowledge into the cause of social ills, is to convert the *context* in which problems arise into an *agent* responsible for our inability to master them." It is this transformation of context (i.e., *scene*) into *agent* which we would consider dramatistically, or from the standpoint of "linguistic action."

First, note that if one generalizes at a sufficiently high level (as with the Spinozistic distinction between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*), one may treat of reality in terms of dichotomies. (Others would be mind and matter, man and nature, personal and impersonal, being and not-being, subject and object, *Werden* and "*Entwerden.*") In brief, such terms are offered as "exhaustive" of reality, since they are so general that any specific thing could be classed under the head of either one or the other, or as a combination of the two. But note that, as regards "definition by location," or definition by context, each member of such pairs can be regarded as the context of the other. Which is to say, each term is the ground or scene of the other. Hence, if you arbitrarily

select one of them as *scene*, the other can be treated as either the *act* or the *agent* (*act* if you use the "dramatic ratio," *agent* if you use the "lyric ratio"). With the matter-mind or object-subject pair, for instance, dialectical materialism would select matter or object as the scene and mind or subject as the agent. But insofar as the scene is treated as the ground of motives, hence providing the conditions which determine the subject's consciousness, it becomes in effect the *active* principle, while the former "agent" (the mind, consciousness, subject, person, or whatever such) becomes merged into the scene as a mere product of the determining factors in the scene. Hence, paradoxically, though you begin with a distinction between scene and agent, you find the scene functioning as the motivating agent, and the agent functioning as at best a passive. Or rather, this is the ultimate metaphysical conclusion of such a pair, a conclusion that may be avoided "humanistically" by simply taking it as a datum that there are separate sources of motivation in both scene and agent (or agents), with perhaps a third source of motives being situated in the interrelationship or "interaction" between the two. Transcendental idealism seems to reverse the materialist manoeuvre, in treating of the ways in which the "forms of the mind" (which would fall under our term "agent," as aspects of the "subjective") constitute the very groundwork of reality, since it is from these properties of the agent that the *Ding an sich* derives its scenic properties: time, space, and causality.*

* Critics of Kant pointed out that either the *Ding an sich* is itself a cause, in limiting the mind's version of reality, in which case causality would not be a purely subjective category; or else all reality can be grounded in the subject. This second version would make *agent* take over the role of *scene*.

When Milton wrote, "The mind is its own place," we see opening the possibilities of idealism. For mind, a property of *agent*, is here proclaimed a scene, or ground. Eventually it could lead to such a thoroughly idealistic statement as this, in Henry James's preface to *The Portrait of a Lady:* "The question comes back thus, obviously, to the kind and degree of the artist's prime sensibility, which is the soil out of which his subject springs. The quality and capacity of that soil, its ability to 'grow' with due freshness and straightness any vision of life, represents, strongly or weakly, the projected morality." Here "sensibility," an obvious attribute of agent is equated with "soil," a synonym for scene.

But as regards Mr. Nagel's formulation: if he would treat mental experience solely in terms of the *conditions* (context) in which it occurs, I think that he hereby automatically obliges himself to deal with it in terms of its "other," which would be in effect its reduction into terms of "what it is not," quite as the anti-naturalists contend. I should take this as a paradox of causality (or substance) that just *is*, and cannot be removed simply by a kind of *argumentum ad hominem*, as when Mr. Nagel argues that, without such scientific reduction to terms of context, the scientific search for cause would be impossible. However, if the analysis of the five basic terms of motivation led one in advance to expect ironic predicaments at the roots of thought, one will begin by taking it for granted that the contextual definition of a subject will *negate* the very thing it would define. (Similarly, if you were to attempt a contextual definition of "purpose," you would be obliged to give all the situations that "de-termine" purpose; and this would in effect be the conversion of purpose into its very opposite, necessity. Yet empirically, there are many instances when we can very clearly distinguish between the experience of purpose and the experience of compulsion—as with the difference between the feeling that accompanies a normal

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Henry James's prefaces as a whole, however, exemplify a much wider use of "dramatistic" co-ordinates than this. Many of his notes deal with the relation between agent and scene (in the sense of the relation between a given work and the situation under which he wrote it). Many others deal with the author's mind as the source of the work, relations between agent and act. And many deal with the purely internal relationships prevailing among act, scene, and agent in a given novel. But throughout the prefaces, he consciously and systematically considers the novel in dramatistic terms.

A beautiful instance of emergent idealism, with mind treated as ground, is in Andrew Marvell's *The Garden:*

> Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
> Withdraws into its happiness:
> The mind, that ocean where each kind
> Does straight its own resemblance find;
> Yet it creates, transcending these,
> Far other worlds, and other seas;
> Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade.

choice of means and the feeling that accompanies a "compulsion neurosis.")

To sum up our distinction between tribal and contextual definition: For tribal definition, the ground of persons must contain a personal principle as "causal ancester" of the person; for contextual definition, the ground of persons must be impersonal. In the concept of God as ground, and as an "absolute person," we can note ambiguities leading either way, for an "absolute person" would be an "impersonal person," a paradox of substance that may indicate why the rationale of Christianity could develop into the rationale of naturalism.

IV

I have paused over some of these metaphysical ergotisms to illustrate, somewhat at random, ways in which one can shift between the logic of the pentad considered generally, as an algebra, and the applications to specific theories of motivation. But since the controversy began in an attack upon theories of motivation that attain their most complete form in supernaturalist concepts of God, we might move towards the close of our discussion by some conclusions on this distinguished subject. As the "ontological argument" was designed to prove that the existence of God was implicit in the very process of reason itself: to think systematically was to find that God had to exist, and the "dramatistic perspective" would offer a kind of "linguistic parallel" to the ontological argument. The dramatistic version would be: the very logic of language establishes the necessity for the existence of a "god-term."

That is: explanatory terms require generalized terms that summarize them; these in turn require higher generalizations, and so on, until one arrives at an over-all term, a summarizing term, a "Title of Titles," in which all explanation is implicit. Such titular terms, by their very nature as titular terms, cannot supply the details of an explanation. As judged from this point of view, any "god-term" can be omitted from the explanation of any happen-

ing. What Galileo said of God (that references to God explain nothing because they explain everything), one may say likewise of "mechanism," "necessity," "causality," "dialectical materialism," "history," or the naturalist's word, "nature." Indeed, the same is true of such lesser god-terms as "intelligence" or "scientific method."

At one point, for instance, Mr. Dewey says of scientific method that, after all, it is "but systematic, extensive and carefully controlled use of alert and unprejudiced observation and experimentation in collecting, arranging and testing facts to serve as evidence." Imagine that you had gone to Mr. Dewey, asking, "How could I go about it, scientifically, to produce the electrolysis of water," and he answered, "Just use scientific method; just be systematically, extensively and carefully controlled in your use . . ." etc. The thought suggests that the passage is full of god-terms and lesser god-terms. For a summarizing term, by its very capacity for summarization, is unable to satisfy the needs of concrete explanation, which must be like the instructions for opening a can, instructions that are the same to supernaturalist, antinaturalist and naturalist.

Operationalism has at least served the purpose of making it apparent how extensive our use of "god-terms" and "divine" terms, in this technical sense, really is. And since a philosophy of science is, after all, not itself a science, in the sense of a restricted technological discipline, but a *set of words*, like any other philosophy, we must at least guard ourselves against thinking that *any* philosophy, though it may eliminate "God" as a term, can thereby eliminate "god-terms," for such titular counters are its very stock-in-trade. Carry out the test of Galileo, in eliminating all words not needed for specific instructions, and operationalist ideals of language become the logical conclusion of this method. Operationalism, which in its perfection is a vocabulary with no words for "action" but only words for "motion," is the nearest we may come to "atheism," in our present linguistic sense, though a scientist could not tell you that what he was doing represented "operationalism" without thereby relapsing into godhead, for he would here necessarily be back in the realm of the titular.

Mathematics, considered dramatistically, can disclose its relation to the neo-Platonist ideal, which aimed at the use of language to transcend language, a kind of dialectic that would "abolish itself" (as Marx later held that the proletarian would, as a termination of dialectical processes, end by abolishing itself and thereby abolishing the whole dialectics of a class struggle). For in the neo-Platonist version of transcendence, the dialectician began with sensory images, and subjected them to transformations whereby their sensory diversity was completely lost in generalization, the structure being completed in the vision of the One (or, in our linguistic version, the Title of Titles). When reading accounts of mathematical progress, and of the ways in which images, or metaphors, guided the development of mathematical formulae, we can see how mathematics can figure in the dialectic. One might, for instance, conceive of electricity after the analogy of a river, and thereby arrive at formulae for ohms, volts, and amperes, corresponding to the strength, speed, and volume of the water in a river bed. Other aspects of electricity, however, would suggest other metaphors, which in turn acquired corresponding mathematical formulation. And finally, as men began to work with these formulations themselves, complicating them with the help of still other metaphors, they finally attained formulations beneath which lay a whole jumble of disjunct imagery, more bewildering than any mystic's oxymoron or any Surrealist's assemblage of forms from different orders of experience. This is, in effect, a way of carrying out the dialectician's ideal: the use of imagery to transcend imagery. And surely Faraday's search for a mathematical formula that would reduce all forms of energy to one expression is, in effect, an embodiment of the neo-Platonist's movement towards the One, the Title of Titles. Such a formula would be a perfect "god-term," inasmuch as it had, through a dialectic operation lasting through two thousand years and carried on by many voices, progressed through imagery to the complete transcending of imagery. Still it would not be quite the end, for it would not quite have led through language to the transcending of language, since mathematics is but a special case of

language. But in any case, it is relevant to note that any such summarizing term would also have to be dispensed with, in any statement about specific motivational problems; for whatever its value as a summarization about the nature of nature, it would be of no value whatsoever in describing the disposition of factors to be considered by a particular person trying to reach a decision about a specific matter of human relations. In another way, its very nature as a generalization, or summation, or title of titles, would lay it open to the same objection that Galileo raised to the name of God.

What god-terms do, I think, is to supply a certain over-all *quality* of explanation. That is, there is a different kind of attitude, or implicit program of action, in the choice of one title rather than another. However, one must be prompt to modify this statement; for the same title may sum up totally different attributes for two different users. Indeed, if one considers from this point of view the old bitter controversies as to whether men shall or shall not be permitted freedom of worship, one realizes that, whether we would have it so or not, the very nature of the world grants to every man, nay forces upon him, the right to worship God in his own metaphor. For even though all men were agreed on the name of God, or whatever power, personal or impersonal, natural or supernatural, is to be considered the ultimate ground of human action and experience, it would still remain a fact that the different contexts in which this word was used would define it differently. When a man's work is added up, we can find what attributes he has assigned, in spite of himself, to his Title of Titles, his word for the ultimate ground or guiding principle. For we may find, on inspection, that his page has some measure of invention, or grandeur, or simplicity, or gracefulness, or stylistic power only where his titular term is endowed with the attributes of charity. Or then again, he may write well only in passages that show his god-term to have the genius of intolerance and threat. For even with a man who has adopted "scientific method" as the name of his god-principle (a principle that rationalizes human effort for him by reason of the fact that it is felt to be intrinsi-

cally good) we may find him greatly at his best only when in the name of his god he is cursing his opponents and seeking magically to coerce the future by phophesying that dire evil will befall them; and though in the name of his god he overtly calls for tolerance, we can discern, lurking covertly behind his words, the Inquisitorial Pyres of any poor wretches who, if he were in authority, happened to disagree with him in doctrinal matters.

But as regards grammatical elements alone, the dramatistic perspective suggests that we may honor scientific method, and profit by its admonitions insofar as the state of our knowledge permits, without thereby concluding that the motivations local to its disciplines should usurp the entire field of motivation. And particularly insofar as scientific method attains its external counterpart in the structure of technology, the logic of drama, or dialectic, would admonish us to look for the emergence of a certain basic inadequacy, with a corresponding invitation to nostalgia. Insofar as an ideal attains institutional embodiment, to this degree it ceases to have value purely as incentive or directive, as purpose, and takes on rather the nature of a predicament. Thus our machinery, though it is derived from the most adventuresome aspects of the mind, is in its materiality no longer simply a kind of beacon towards which we might progress, as it was when only at exceptional moments could men conceive of even its rudiments, as they worked haltingly towards the rational systematizations of God out of which in time the rationalizations of technology could develop. When this exceptional vision is embodied in machinery, instead of a dimly foreseen goal towards which we might progress, through the "ordeals" of hypothesis and experiment, it becomes a vast source of maladjustments, both as regards world politics and world economics, and as regards the impairment of ritualistic expression, with its corresponding increase of routine. (One thinks, for instance, of the elaborate filing system needed to keep the machines in orderly operation.)

I have omitted one irony from consideration here: the possibility that "naturalism" is a grave misnomer for a philosophy which, in many of its aspects at least, might more appropriately

be called "technologism." Much of the resonance in the term "nature" derives from the supernaturalist attitude, which thought of natural law as derivative from the divine. In time the *distinction* between the natural and the divine became dialectically transformed into the *contrast* between the natural and the divine. Or, if we think of "God" as the whole and "nature" as a part, we could say that the supernaturalist treated nature as a part *synecdochically* related to the whole, whereas in time naturalism treated this as a *divisive* relation. Or, to adopt a very suggestive usage in Charles M. Perry's *Toward a Dimensional Realism*, the notion of nature as *a part of* God could be converted into the notion of nature as *apart from* God.

But insofar as this divisive emphasis developed, and the secular appeal of "nature" relied less upon connotations of the supernatural, "nature" gained resonance from a new source, the romantic reaction against the "unnatural" world progressively created by the technological "conquest" of nature. To an extent, therefore, the selection of "naturalism" as the name for a philosophy of applied science may be *compensatory* rather than *consistent* (somewhat as though one were to call a philosophy "humanistic" because it aimed at the systematic elimination of traits that were formerly considered characteristically human, or as religious doctrines of "personalism" may be formulated, not because the individual person really is in a position of paramount importance, but precisely because he is *not*.

Such tactics of entitling are as legitimate as any other, once the irony has been made explicit. Indeed, philosophies are never quite "consistent" in this sense. All thought tends to name things not because they are precisely as named, but because they are not quite as named, and the name is designed as a somewhat hortatory device, to take up the slack. As has been pointed out in the past, for instance, if the philosophy of "utilitarianism" were wholly correct, there would be no need for the philosophy. For men would spontaneously and inevitably follow the dictates of utility; whereas in actuality the doctrine proclaiming the ubiquity of the utilitarian motive was formulated to serve

as a *plea* for the deliberate consulting of the utilitarian motive.

There is an irony of historical development whereby the very strength in the affirming of a given term may the better enable men to make a world that departs from it. For the very affirming of the term as their god-term enables men to go far afield without sensing a loss of orientation—and by the time the extent of their departure is enough to become generally obvious, the very stability of the new order they have built in the name of the old order gives them the strength to abandon their old god-term and adopt another. Hence, noting that something so highly unnatural as technology developed under the name of naturalism, we might ironically expect that, were "technologism" to become the name for "naturalism," the philosophy would be the first step towards a development *away from* technology. And as indication that this is not mere improvising, the philosophy of "operationalism," modeled after technological procedures, embodies a totally different concept of meaning than the one which, we know as a historical fact, figured as an incentive in the *invention* of technological devices and their corresponding mathematical formulae. Hence, if carried out rigorously, it would lead to the *stabilization* of technological operations rather than to the development of new ones. As "naturalism" would lead us, via technology, away from nature, so perhaps "operationalism" might be a way of leading us, in the name of technological operations, away from technology.

Iowa City Zoo

By Jean Garrigue

That ring-necked pheasant, feather-worn,
Drinks water gray-scummed, his snake eye
Sullen in no gratitude, leaves, thick on wire
Of chicken cage; the sun falls in
Through escaped feathers and the taint of leaves.
It's arbitrary, that roof the Autumn's blown.

Delicately the rabbit drinking catches
His chin hairs there; they're limp from weight.
A black wife hunches in the farther dark.
The turkey hens are crying frugally,
Their heads in a maze of discontent
Shoo their turkey-cocks toward them!

Look: their dirty runways, races, water,
Their leaky houses, battered turnips, grain
Rotting (mauve doves peck at the soiling floor,
Their eyes diamonded by curious zest—the blood
That shines there through the eye?) What dignity
Affronts offal! Security that cannot be disarmed!

The pastel faces of the turkey cocks;
Their feathers bundled like ungainly suits;
The spindling neck at such a painful angle
Strung from the mid-bulk of their bodies;
The tropical plant of the rabbit ear,
Whiskers a gauzy little jungle . . .

But wall-eyed deer, the lilacs fed you well.
Since you are blind your eyes are all of us.
When will we trip and fall upon their look,
That bugled eye, that marble-sick uniqueness?
The rabbit's shamed who drinks dewfall
And you in your detention here
Have dulled our natures with your spartan glitter,
As misery embarrasses the poor.

The Swan

By Howard Moss

Darkly at first, through weeds,
The white and youngest swan
Rides on the mirrored lake:
Its lithe brocaded foot
Barters in reflection
What darkness at the root?

This swan may not perceive
Eye opened on two worlds
What emblem rides below.
In time's dankest well
Where eye is infidel
All images are double.

Weaving from reed to rush
No shadow of the swan
Is open to caress:
But his one madness
As neophyte of sun
Is double beingness.

Lost in the weather of the lake,
Lace hidden in the water,
Where is the mind's delight?
O which was peerless once
This braceleted embarker
Or death of every sense?

When the reeds give way
This swan is wholly sensual.
What anchorage may weigh
His thinness in the sun?
Fictive on obsidian
How muscular the swan!

Cicero

By Osmond Beckwith

Youth is good; the middle
Also good; old age
Good as either. Granted
A considerable income,
An elevated position,
A modest intelligent wife,
Comely respectful children.
But I look forward
To the time when my philosophy
Is unread, when no one remembers
The past or casts on
Toward the future; when
Each hour ripens itself
And the hour after
And the hour after.

Calendar Piece

By Lloyd Frankenberg

The two beautiful children stand on the marble brink,
He with a lamb in his hands, she with a basket of flowers.
The ground at their feet, the urn at their side pink with more
flowers,
They stand with their backs to the scene, serene in the happy
hours.

They will go on, brother and sister or lovers I think,
Over the blue lagoon, on to the marble bowers;
Past pillars that stand like candles tipped with a wink of
flowers,
In a little boat to the stone steps where cypress towers;

Will climb the hazywooded hill, arrive and blink
At the rosy mountains, clouds like fountains in glowing
showers.
They stand. A golden horseshoe links good luck with flowers.
Six bluebirds kiss, flutter through hibiscus the livelong hours

Of months that have not turned since calendar years ago
To mark the mountains cracking to volcano.

BOOK REVIEWS

Andre Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought: KLAUS MANN. Creative Age Press.

The publication of this book in America in 1943 is a striking symbol: the son of the most eminent German writer alive pays homage, in English, to the greatest master of French prose of our day. Only another volume on André Gide is available in the English language: the translation of Léon Pierre-Quint's monograph, in many respects a more penetrating and revealing explanation of the French author's career and talent than the present biography. It is surprising and disappointing that American writers, outside of scholars in university seminars, should not have felt more attracted by Gide's psychology and art. Few foreign novelists could provide a healthier antidote to the native influences, often misleading and pernicious for young authors, of robust but indiscriminating novelists like Thomas Wolfe, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck and William Faulkner. In France, talents as different from each other, and from Gide himself, as Mauriac, Malraux, Saint-Exupéry and Julian Green have all been powerfully impressed and indirectly aided by him.

Klaus Mann's biography is pleasantly written and well informed. It follows Gide's life and analyses his varied and often contradictory literary productions with a commendable faithfulness. Its estimate of Gide's volumes is on the whole acceptable, although *The Counterfeiters* seems to us overrated by Klaus Mann and superficially discussed as a novel. The five or six artistic masterpieces of Gide, alone destined to survive among a score or so of other "récits" or treatises, are not clearly set apart: *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, *Philoctète*, *Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue*, *La Porte Etroite*, *Dostoievski*, and the lengthy *Journal*. Klaus Mann is nowhere guilty of the logomachic ponderousness of much German criticism, but he fails to display the subtle penetration or the philosophical power which mark the best critical essays of his father, or those of Klaus Mann's introducer to Gide, Ernst Robert Curtius.

Gide's prose is the most lucid and, at its best, the most moving in its classical perfection written by any Frenchman in the present century. Its fluent clarity is, however, deceptive. Gide is infinitely more complex than Claudel, and probably more difficult to interpret than Proust. Klaus Mann merely touches upon the four problems which lie at the root of Gide's talent: the religious problem and the legacy of Protestantism, which Gide never completely repudiated, would deserve much more attention from the biographer of the only great Protestant writer (with the exception of the Swiss Rousseau) in the whole range of French literature. The moral problem, closely connected with the first, has also been a lasting obsession with that strange Nietzschean Frenchman who could never leap "beyond good and evil." The third and thorny question is that of the Gidian "abnormality," tactfully treated by Klaus Mann. When it served as the direct subject of Gide's works, in *Corydon*, *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, even in *L'Immoraliste*, homosexuality proved disappointing. But it provided Gide with much more than a few novel themes; his "inquiétude," his delineation of women,

his keen curiosity for the adolescent, even many of his literary tastes, and his originality as an official non-conformist are no doubt to be traced to Gide's preoccupation with sexual abnormality. Fourthly and above all, Gide is an artist. In September 1909, he wrote in his *Journal:* "The trajectory of my mind will not be easily drawn; its curve will only be revealed in my style; and more than one will fail to see it." The analysis and appreciation of Gide's art and of his admirable prose remain too cursory and superficial in Klaus Mann's volume.

Klaus Mann certainly fulfills the first requisite of a critic of a great writer: he treats his hero with respect and studies him with enthusiasm. Whether he succeeds in imparting his enthusiasm to his readers is more open to question. His point of view is that of a liberal German and of a broad-minded European, with a few naive touches betraying Klaus Mann's ego and stating his own private reasons for liking Gide, and his own, and rather uninteresting, meeting with the Frenchman. One wishes for an approach more general and more objective in character. Europe has long been reading, discussing and assimilating Gide's message. American literature, whose qualities are highly prized by Gide because they are the exact opposite of his own, might gain by being told what it may learn from the French moralist and artist. Gide has welcomed the most divergent foreign influences: Nietzsche, Goethe, Dostoievski, Blake, Browning, Walt Whitman. Yet he is none the less personal, and none the less French for it. He has, all his life, meditated on the problem of sincerity in art, and showed how fallacious is the naive superstition of many a young man in a youthful literature: they imagine that one is sincere through merely revealing everything in frank or coarse language, through discarding restraint, rules and conventions. To be sincere is easy; to be "authentique," that is, to discover gradually and painfully the person we are at bottom, to express completely and to become that person—this has been Gide's ambition and lesson—a timely one in our age and country. Finally, Gide has miraculously avoided the pitfall into which so many authors fall when they reach the middle of the road of their lives: they do not renew themselves, they do not mature; and instead of heroically digging deeper into themselves, they repeat their past works, clinging to an outworn form from which the soul and the sap have been eliminated; or else they resort to politics, social propaganda or journalism in the vain hope of thus changing their themes, if not themselves, and of remaining in the public eye. Gide, who is now seventy-four, has tirelessly striven to avoid monotony, repetition, dessication, intellectual death. He has unceasingly become more exacting for himself, more understanding of others, more human, more wildly athirst for life, that is, for energy, newness, freedom, light. With Gide, wrote André Malraux, a great human current has found its expression in our days, as it had with Phidias, Montaigne, Goethe: the defense of man attacked by the gods.

HENRI PEYRE

Street Songs: EDITH SITWELL. Macmillan & Co.

"Oh, how shall Summer's honey breath hold out against the wreckful siege of battering days?" One has always associated the poetry of Edith Sitwell with coloured images and analogies of extraordinary precision, with a feeling for texture so fine that we were able to perceive the texture of a word and the effect of that word upon the other words in a line, and the effect of their combined assonances and dissonances upon the rhythmical impetus and the structure of

the poem. The melodic pattern of her words are so composed that the sounds created by the overtones and undertones make new super-structures of sound above the scaffolding of the verse casting sound shadows. In *Street Songs*, Miss Sitwell has developed a new technique proper to her subject—the suffering of common people in war, with all it implies of death, destruction, hunger and darkness. Gone are the bright images, the brilliant analogies, the gay alliterations; flashes of beauty still remain, but more sombre in colour. In most of these poems the bare line, the bone and skeleton of the poem has the rigidity of grief growing out of the theme. The rhythmic lines are bare almost to austerity. There is a terrible pathos in these poems about the victims of brutality and the world dying of spiritual decay. In the first poem, *Still Falls The Rain*, written during the air raids of 1940, Miss Sitwell attains unusual compression largely by the use of short simple words evocative as symbols. This great poem about the monotonous repetitiveness of tragedy begins with the supplication of the Litany, and goes on,

"Still falls the Rain—
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss—
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails
Upon the Cross."

And,

"Still falls the Rain
In the Field of Blood where the small hopes breed and
the human brain
Nurtures its greed, that worm with the brow of Cain."

And,

"The wounds of the baited bear,—
The blind and weeping bear whom the keepers beat
On his helpless flesh . . . the tears of the hunted hare."

Here is all the love, the identification, the compassion for suffering of Blake's *Songs Of Innocence* and Rilke's poetry, which shame the world. The poem with its majestic ending, its broadening, deepening, lengthening lines and powerfully swelling vowels, conveys a momentous emotion controlled by a rigorous structural rhythm. *Still Falls The Rain* will take its place among the great mystical poems of the English language, the poetry of the metaphysical poets and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

In the lullaby to a child whose mother has been killed by a bomb aimed at an aerodrome, the theme is that of man's fall from a potential God to something not far removed from an ape—the result of arrested spiritual evolution. It is better that the child, having nothing to hold and to make, should discard his hands and his pretentions to manhood, and return to the animal state with its limitations and its purity.

"In wolfish pelt she'd hide thy bones
To shield thee from the world's long cold,
And down on all fours shouldst thou crawl
For thus from no height canst thou fall—
Do, do."

The perfect roundness of the vowel sounds and the internal rhymes of the following verse are remarkable apart from their associations of emptiness, skulls, and the deep holes made by bombs and the steel egg laid in the mother's breast:

"She sat in the hollow of the sea—
A socket whence the eye's put out—
She sang to the child a lullaby
(The steel birds' nest was thereabout.)"

Many of the poems, like *Poor Young Simpleton* and *Tattered Serenade*, are about the futility of the modern world in which man's chief desire is to satiate his greed. A world in ruins decaying into nothingness.

"She has hearkened the Spider's prudence, the wisdom
That, spinning a fould architecture, unfurled
From his belly a city made out of Hunger—
Constructed for Hunger's need: . . ."

And,

"And no identity! No face to weep!
No bed—unlike the rich men who can creep
Into the pocks made by that vast disease
That is our civilization, once there, lie at ease!"

There is hope only in,

"The flame of the first blade
Is an angel piercing through the earth to sing
'God is everything!' "

Edith Sitwell maintains that the heart of man still holds some promise—"man's heart that sun, outliving all terrors shaking the old night." *Street Songs* end with what is perhaps the finest poem in the book, *An Old Woman*, in which the old woman, seeing this time of spiritual decay as "mankind's dark seed-time," forgives through the knowledge that evil is not a conscious thing but comes from ignorance of spiritual laws.

This is not exquisite poetry on a minor scale, it is poetry of the first order. Here is beauty, gravity, wisdom, and technical excellence, not to be found in any other poet writing today with the exception of T. S. Eliot.

ALLANAH HARPER

The Law of Civilization and Decay. An Essay on History: BROOKS ADAMS; Introduction by CHARLES A. BEARD. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1943.

Brooks Adams' *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, first published here fifty years ago, and now reprinted, was a pioneer work by an American on at least two counts: it was the first and perhaps the ablest effort in this country to work out a "law" of history; and it was the first historical work in America to find the meaning of events in an understanding of the economic issues involved.

According to Adams' statement in his Preface the "law" of civilization and decay describes the process by which society oscillates between decentralized, relatively simple social life such as existed, say, in republican Rome, or in Eu-

rope between 600 and 1100 A.D., and highly integrated, energetic life, such as characterized the early Roman empire, or prevails in our own time. In the decentralized, primitive eras fear is the predominant human instinct, expressing itself in the imaginatve temperament of the religious mystic and artist, or in the emotional simplicity of the warrior. These are the prevailing personality types of simple societies. The process of centralization commences when the powers of military attack gain ascendency over the defense, permitting the institution of paid police. The military type is thus made obsolete. Even more important in promoting centralization is the accumulation of precious metals. As the society becomes peaceful greed replaces fear as the prevailing instinct, trade supersedes war, intercommunication breaks down hostile localisms, and the priest and soldier fade away before the merchant and banker as skepticism and the rational temperament replace the vivid imaginative qualities of the simpler period. The peak of centralization is reached when the social energy represented by the productive capacity of the society, for at this point the banker gains ascendency over the producer, and exploitation replaces production as the dominant social force. The small producer, i.e., the farmer, is liquidated by credit stringency and low prices, and with his disappearance the society which rested upon him decays to the point where it is vulnerable to external dangers (the Barbarian invasions) or to internal decay and race suicide. With the completion of the process the cycle may be repeated.

Adams' law of civilization was derived from the study of selected aspects of European history from the days of the early Roman republic to the present. Within that span the cycle of "civilization and decay" recurs one and one-half times. The rise and fall of Rome, the one complete cycle examined, is discussed in about fifty pages; while the remaining 250 pages are devoted to an analysis of the process of centralization in the West, chiefly in England. This is scanty evidence on which to base a universal law of history, and in this respect Adams' limited view compares unfavorably with the wider perspectives of Spengler or Arnold Toynbee. In concentrating upon the centralization of Western culture Adams was primarily concerned with the economic transformations which brought successively to the fore the medieval trader, the merchant-adventurer, the nabob, the manufacturer, the industrial-capitalist, and finally the finance-capitalist. The chapters dealing with these developments belong among the finest writings in economic history. As a bullionist Adams believed that the economic forces causing the concentration or dispersal of stocks of precious metals were the first causes of the centralization or collapse of civilizations. When the metallic base of currency and credit was adequate society prospered and further centralization occurred. Thus the gold of Peru, India, and California, added to the supply of European nations, was a major factor in the growth of Western society. The peak of centralization had been reached and Rome had fallen when its gold and silver was drained off to the East. The decay of the West commenced at the end of the nineteenth century with the triumph of finance-capitalism over industrial-capitalism. For thenceforward it would be to the interest of the dominant bankers to restrict the credit base in order that debts might be more valuable when they matured than when they were contracted. The demonitization of silver Adams interpreted to be the result of the bankers' supremacy. Universal pauperization and ultimate decentralization must be the long-range prospect.

It is possible that historians like the two Adamses, Spengler, and Toynbee have had their full share in creating the mood of pessimism which dominates much of the intellectual life of our time. These are the men who seem to have suffered the most acute "failure of nerve." It may be useful, therefore, to examine the intellectual traditions from which they, and especially Brooks Adams, stem. The most obvious characteristic of these historians is their professed devotion to the scientific method and ideals. In the first sentence of his book Adams disclaimed any preconceived bias. His theories merely described the way the historical facts unfolded themselves. But these historians' devotion to the scientific temper involved more than scrupulous observance of the ideals of objectivity and impartiality. The domain of common honesty is after all wider than that of science. The scientific historian of this school professes to be interested in history only insofar as it can be made to yield up the secret of its process, so that prediction is possible. In order to predict with assurance the full paraphernalia of science must be employed, and consequently Spengler elaborates his "morphology" of world history, while Henry Adams variously applies to human affairs the law of entropy and the phase rule. Brooks Adams starts with the "accepted scientific principle that the law of force and energy is of universal application in nature," going on to assert that "the velocity of the social movement of any community is proportionate to its energy and mass, and its centralization is proportionate to its velocity; therefore as human movement is accelerated, societies centralize." While no one will cavil at honest efforts to discover the laws of human society, we may well hesitate to accept Adams' blithe identification of social mass with physical mass. In astronomy the principles of mechanics produced brilliant achievements in prediction. The temptation to make a similar application to human affairs seems to have been more than Adams could resist.

There is another element in the temper of the "scientific" school of historians which deserves notice. Are their predictions of doom purely incidental to the discovery of the laws of history, or does their interest in "decline," "decay," and "entropy" appear to be more than scientific? There is little doubt that the latter is the case. But without the evidence at hand to make more of the point we can be sure that much of the fascination these books hold for modern readers lies in the morbid satisfaction to be derived from contemplating the impending dissolution of our own society. The appropriation of scientific terminology and methods by the professional pessimists is one of the more interesting phenomena of our times, for until recently science with all its prestige was invariably enlisted on the side of enlightenment and progress. Without going all the way with Mr. Krutch in his analysis of the inevitability of this transformation it is certainly safe to conclude that profoundly complex social forces produce the climates of opinion which bend technologies, historical attitudes, and religious beliefs to their own ends.

A predictive science of history can assign to man a creative role only in the most limited sense. Even the greatest genius can realize nothing beyond the opportunities which his age offers. In the eleventh century a genius of the imaginative type could become Pope Gregory VII and dominate Europe. In a materialistic and skeptical era the same genius would be the helpless puppet of the Mussolinis and Hitlers. The gap between the two ages is spanned by impersonal economic process. At best the genius only furthers the process and pro-

vides the historian with spectacular illustrations of its operation. Adams reflected the prevailing tendency of modern scholarship when he insisted that the individual is the creature of his society, but he carried the principle to extremes where few will follow. Only the hero who rides the crest of the wave of success may find space in Adams' pages. Hildebrand receives ample notice, while the founder of Hildebrand's religion is not mentioned. How Christ could have proclaimed the doctrines on which the Christian church was founded at Rome in a centralized and skeptical age is a paradox Adams does not attempt to resolve. While we may grant Adams' contention that social energy at that time was expressed largely through materialistic forms we may still question the utility of a law of history which ignores such important subjects as the founding and growth of great religions.

STOW PERSONS

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